

Station 7 - Forgiveness

Remember when you wrote your sins on the piece of fabric? You have had to carry those sins around for a while and a lot has happened since then. But that is how sin works; we each are responsible for our own choices. However, when Jesus died on the cross, He chose to take our sins on Himself. He offered to carry our sins for us. Romans 3: 23-26 says, *"Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes us right with Him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. God gave Christ as a sacrifice to pay for sins through the spilling of His blood. So God forgives the sins of those who have faith. God did all this to prove that He does what is right. He is a God of mercy."*

Take the piece of fabric, place it in the water and bring it back up. What has happened to the writing? The cloth is completely clean! The sin is gone! When we realize we need a Savior and ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and be in charge of our life, He no longer sees our bad choices. Hebrews 8:12 says, *"I will forgive their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins."*

Jesus lived a perfect life. He did not deserve to die. But when He died on the cross, Jesus took our sins on Himself. Lay the piece of fabric at the foot of the cross. As a family, thank Jesus for taking our sins on Himself.

Station 8 - The Temple Veil

In the Temple, there was a very special area called the Holy of Holies. This area was behind a curtain, and only the High Priest could enter this special area once a year. This was God's special home among His people, but the curtain separated God from the people. And this wasn't any old curtain, this curtain was HUGE! We don't know exactly how tall or thick it was, but it was most likely over 60 feet tall and around 4 inches thick. Walk through the fabric, and as you do, look up. This curtain is less than half of the height of the actual temple veil!

When He died on the cross, Jesus made a way for us to be with God, and in that moment, the Temple Veil was torn. After seeing how tall and thick the Temple Veil was, do you think there is any way that was done by a human? But wait, it gets even better! The Temple Veil didn't just tear in half, it tore in half from TOP to BOTTOM! Over 60 feet tall and it tore from top to bottom. Matthew 27:50-51 says, *"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split..."* God made it very clear that the curtain has fallen between Him and us, and we can all be with God now if we make that decision!

Our Journey tonight may be over, but there is still more to experience. You are invited to partake in a personal Lord's Supper in the Worship Center. As you leave for the evening, please do so quietly out of respect for those who are still continuing through their journey. We hope to see you this weekend at one of our Easter services as we celebrate Jesus' finished work on the cross!

JOURNEY to the Cross

Welcome to our Journey to the Cross. We love that you have made this a part of your family's Easter celebration this year. Our prayer is that this journey will help you gain a better understanding of the events that led up to Jesus' ultimate sacrifice. Here are some suggestions as you begin your travels through the last moments of Jesus' life:

We have provided this short guide for your family's journey with a summary to read aloud at each station and directions for how your family can interact with that station. There are eight stations, and we invite the entire family to participate with each one.

While we encourage discussion and questions, please try to speak in quiet voices, keeping in mind that other families may be praying.



Station 1 - Creation

Have a seat in The Courts and watch the Creation Video, then read this aloud:

The Beginning—it's where all good stories start, and the story of creation is no different. Genesis 1:1 says *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* God created everything, and not only that, but He created it perfectly. *"God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good."* (Genesis 1:3) God separated the sea from the land and saw that it was good. He created plants and trees and all sorts of delicious fruits and vegetables for us to eat. And it was good. He placed the sun, moon, and stars in the sky—and it was good. Birds filled the air and fish filled the sea. And it was good. Then came the animals—tiny to humongous and everything in between, God created them all. And it was good. But that's not all, God's work was not done. On the sixth day, from the dust of the ground, God created man. *"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."* (Genesis 1:31) God's creation was just as He intended it to be; it was good, it was complete, it was perfect...

Discuss as a family: Why is it important that God's creation was perfect?

Station 2 - The Fall

...but not for long. When God created Adam and Eve, He gave them a lot of freedom, but asked one thing of them: not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose to disobey, and when we choose to disobey God, there are consequences. Sin entered the world. Sin is anything we say, think, or do that makes God sad. Adam and Eve knew that they had done wrong, and they even tried to hide from God, but God knew exactly what had happened.

Talk about some different sins. Each family member should pick up a white fabric piece and write a sin they struggle with on it using the markers provided. As you continue your journey, each family member should carry their own fabric piece, just as each individual person carries their own sin (you'll need it later in the journey).

Station 3 - Garden of Gethsemane

Because of the sin that entered the world, all of humanity would need a Savior and that is where our journey continues.

Jesus often went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, however, this particular time He knew that He was about to be betrayed. On the night that Jesus was arrested, He prayed three separate times. In Matthew 26:39, He prays, *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."* Jesus knew that God was about to ask Him to do something very difficult, but He also wanted to obey. And not only did Jesus want to obey, in the next station, we will see that He DID obey.

Find a spot and pray as a family:

- Thank Jesus for His willingness to obey God.
- Ask for God's help to obey Him no matter what.
- Pray that you would listen to what God has to say to you throughout the rest of tonight's journey.

Station 4 - The Crucifixion

As you walk through this station, allow your child to experience the crucifixion through interacting with each of the items.

- **Crown of Thorns**-Carefully feel the sharpness of the crown of thorns. Point out that this was used to tease and taunt Jesus. Jesus allowed them to tease Him and did not retaliate. Ask your children if they are ever teased and if so, how do they respond?
"They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand. Then they knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. 'Hail, king of the Jews!' they said." (Matthew 27:28-29)
- **Cross**-Feel the roughness of the cross.
"Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified Him..." (John 19:17-18)
- **Wine Vinegar and Q-Tips**-Have children pick up a Q-tip, soak it in wine vinegar and taste it. Dispose of the Q-tip once finished.
"Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When He had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, He bowed his head and gave up His spirit." (John 19:28-30)

Station 5 - Jesus' Burial

After Jesus died on the cross, the Bible says that two of His friends took His body and prepared it for burial. They used almost 75 pounds of oils and spices and *"taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs."* (John 19:40) This action shows us two important things. First, Jesus' friends used a very large amount of incredibly expensive oils and spices, His friends cared about Him and loved Him very much. Jesus' friends were devoted to Him.

The other important thing that we learn is that Jesus' friends did not expect Him to come back to life. They were preparing Him for burial, for what they thought would be His final resting place. But God had other plans. Smell the spices and oils and remember that Jesus' story is not over yet!

Station 6 - The Empty Tomb

After Jesus died on the cross, His body was put in a tomb. Pilate and his officers made sure that it was sealed securely and that no one could get in. *"Take a guard," Pilate answered. 'Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard."* (Matthew 27:65-66)

As your family looks at the empty tomb, remember that Jesus rose again! He is alive! *"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.'"* (Matthew 28:1-6)